

Democrat but not at all partisan. The relationship he had with the late Ted Stevens on the Appropriations Committee was historic and actually inspirational. They were so different ostensibly in their background and in their temperament, particularly. Ted Stevens, bless his memory, was my neighbor and my dear friend. Let's say he had a—how do I describe it? He was a very emotional person. DANNY INOUE was more calm. But they formed this remarkable friendship based on shared history, going back to World War II, and probably some sense of shared destiny in the sense they were both from the two last States to join the Union, not part of the continental United States, and came as the first Senators and were here so long. But truly what united them was an enormous dedication to America and patriotism.

I said DAN INOUE's legacy is in Connecticut and probably most every other State. I could go around the State, and I am thinking of the years and years that DANNY was the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. There wasn't anything we were able to do for Connecticut in that time that he didn't support, including protecting Long Island Sound, the Connecticut River, improving our transportation systems, making grants to our schools, colleges, and universities, and support of the defense industries in Connecticut which have meant so much to the defense of our country but also to the economy of our State.

I salute his memory. All of us should honor it and all of us should try in our own way to emulate this great man.

#### NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT TRAGEDY

Mr. LIEBERMANN. Mr. President, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I come to the floor to thank our colleagues for adopting by unanimous consent S.R. 621, which is exactly mirrored in the words of H.R. 833, condemning the attacks that occurred in Newtown, CT, last Friday and expressing sorrow to all those affected by those attacks. We are still in shock in Connecticut. All of us who know this little town, as America has come to know it, which includes 27,000, 28,000 people, known it is a beautiful town with hard-working people who worked their way to get there. These are tight families, very religious, very much involved in the life of the community, and peaceful. Out of nowhere—and this tragically is the point and the warning—comes this one deranged individual with guns and slaughters 26 innocents, breaking our hearts, and 20 of those being young children.

I am sure everybody now feels as if they are part of the family of those who were killed. We look at the faces of those children, pure and innocent, and I think of the words of one of the clergymen at the interfaith service the other night: These are angels and they

are really with the angels in Heaven now.

With the work and response of the first responders and the trauma they have gone through to face what they had to face and the carnage they witnessed there, as we talk to some of them they feel guilty they didn't get there earlier and couldn't have stopped it somehow. Of course, they did more than we could ask of anybody. They ran to the danger. The principal, the teachers—I mean the stories that come out about the heroism.

I remember long ago I heard someone speak who said the definition of courage is grace under pressure. "Pressure" is not even the right word here; it is grace in a moment of terror, the single-mindedness and the grace of the principal, the teachers who acted in a way that put their own lives on the line to protect the lives of the children. Let us speak the truth. There were hundreds more children in that building that could have been targets of this madman.

We are wounded, but I will tell my colleagues America is wounded and the world is wounded. A priest said to me the other night at the service he was so touched that he had received a bundle of letters from schoolchildren in Russia. It reminded me there was an incident in Russia years ago where a gunman went into a schoolhouse and wantonly killed children, and monsignor was so touched by it, but that is the way this event has touched the world.

I will tell my colleagues this is a strong town and we can feel the people of this community pulling together to support the survivors and thinking about how they can rebuild the town and its spirit. One woman said so poignantly the other night at the interfaith service that we will not allow this event to define Newtown, CT—and they will not—but the families of those who have been lost have been changed forever.

It is in that regard I particularly want to thank my colleagues for this resolution of condolence and support. I wish to thank my colleague Senator REID for the moment of silence yesterday in this Chamber. In my faith tradition, when a person visits a house of mourning, one of the customs is for the visitor to sit silently with the mourners. It is very awkward. It is actually not the natural thing we want to do, but this tradition has come about as an act of respect to the mourners because they may be in their own mourning internally, and we want to allow them to speak first if they want to speak. The other is that in the face of death, and particularly in the senseless, brutal deaths of these 26 in Newtown, sometimes the best response is silence and all that the silence contains. So I thank my colleague Senator REID for that moment of silence.

Senator BLUMENTHAL and I and our Connecticut congressional delegation convened a vigil last night at which we all spoke, and Father Conroy, the

Chaplain of the House, offered prayer. Chaplain Black could not be there because he was at Senator INOUE's bedside with his family. We thank all our colleagues who came last night. Their presence meant a lot to us and it meant a lot to the people back home in Newtown.

The question is, Can we do anything to stop this from happening again, even once, but hopefully more often. What can we do? As the President said—incidentally, the President's visit to Newtown was so comforting to the families and all the town, all the people of Connecticut. He brought comfort, and I will say he brought resolve, which was very moving and inspiring to everyone there. As he said, these situations are always complicated. We can always say, as we look at all the possible causes of such a tragedy, that even if we did something about that, even if we banned all guns, there would still be violence or even if we provided better mental health treatment, there would still be people who would break through and commit acts of violence, and even if we removed all the stimuli to violence in our entertainment culture, still people would commit these acts. Of course, that is true, but do we not have the capacity to intervene at the different points in the story of this young man to stop this from happening, at least once, again, and probably many more times? Of course we have that capacity.

I keep being taken back, as people say that human nature is violent—of course, there is violence that goes back to the beginning of recorded history. We remember the two children of Adam and Eve. Cain killed Abel in a terribly violent act. But I think we also have to be instructed by what happened after that when God speaks to Cain and says: Where is your brother?

Cain feigns ignorance and asks the question that echoes through the millennia since then: Am I my brother's keeper?

God says to Cain, in Genesis: What have you done? We can hear in our minds' ears the voice of God in anger: What have you done? You have killed your brother. You have killed my creation.

Then God says: Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.

I think in that the Bible instructs us—the words of God instruct us—that we are our brothers' keepers, we are our sisters' keepers and, of course, we are, most of all, our children's keepers. We can never say, oh, people are violent and turn away. We have the capacity—particularly we here, honored and privileged to serve in the Senate, serve in the House, serve in the White House—to do something about this.

Somebody said to me, as the President said the other night, if we save just one child's life by what we will do, it will have been worth it.

We can save a lot more than one child if we work together. I have talked to people since Friday who said to me:

Why will this be any different? Nothing happened after Columbine or Aurora or Virginia Tech or any of the other acts of mass violence in our society. I do not blame people for being skeptical. That is the truth. We should have acted earlier, and we have not.

I went back. I proposed, with Senator MCCAIN, Senator Byrd, Senator JACK REED, and a bunch of others, the creation of a national commission on violence 3 weeks after Columbine in 1999. It passed the Senate, but it did not make it through the House in conference committee.

So I understand why people are skeptical, but that does not mean we should not hear the cries of those children as the guns of that madman turned on them and actually see their blood on the ground on the floor of that schoolhouse until we get something done. We can prevent this from happening to people again. We can certainly prevent it from happening to some people.

I see signs of hope around us; people, colleagues, who have been protectors of gun rights saying, in the last few days: This has to change. We have to come together and reason together and act together, and everything has to be on the table, including our gun laws.

There was a poll in the Washington Post today. It was very striking to note that for the first time, when people have been asked this question—and they have been asked it after a series of acts of mass violence: Columbine, Virginia Tech, Aurora, et cetera—do you think this was an isolated act or does it say something about more troubling conditions in our society—I am paraphrasing—for the first time—every other time people said it was an isolated act of a madman or mad people—this time they said it reflects a deeper problem in our society.

I believe what causes that change is that 20 of the victims in Newtown, CT, were young children, and there is not only a heartbreak across our country about this, not only anger, but I think there is guilt, and we all ought to feel guilty because, as a society, what the attacks in Newtown say to us is that we have failed to fulfill what would seem to be our most natural—natural law, if you will—responsibility, which is to protect the safety and lives of our children.

So I hope we will act. There will be no better tribute, no better source of consolation to the families who have lost loved ones. I have proposed a commission, as I did in 1999, because these are complicated questions. In almost every one of these acts of mass violence, we have a young man who is troubled. Clearly, in hindsight, family, friends, schoolmates say something was wrong with him. Very often—I have heard rumors about this being the case with Adam Lanza in Newtown; I do not know for sure, so I am not saying it is any more than a rumor—very often, these young men have had an almost hypnotic involvement in some form of violence in our entertainment

culture, particularly violent video games, and then they obtain guns and they go out and become not just troubled young men but mass murderers.

We need to try to intervene, particularly at the beginning with the troubled young man and get him—or if it is a woman her—help quickly, and to make sure our mental health system is there to protect and offer that help, and perhaps in our health system, insurance is there to guarantee payment will be made for that. It is complicated.

The impact of the entertainment culture is complicated as well. Obviously, not every young person who plays a violent video game becomes a killer. I know because I have spent a lot of time looking at the social science—and it goes back decades—that there is a very clear pattern where young people who are involved in violence in the entertainment culture are more aggressive. Thank God, of course, almost none of them become murderers. But some of them do, and we have to ask why.

Then, of course, we need to strengthen our gun laws. I hope either by executive action or legislative action we will convene such a commission, but I want to make very clear I am not offering this idea as a substitute for any action we can take now, any action that the President can take now, for instance, with regard to the existing laws that are aimed at preventing people who should not have guns from having them, keeping guns that really are military and are not part of hunting or sports shooting off the market—anything the President could do, anything Congress could do.

I would support a restoration of the assault ban today.

These are weapons developed by our military originally, not by private industry for hunting or sports shooting purposes. They should not be sold. We have the background checks in the Brady bill if you attempt to buy a gun from a licensed Federal firearms dealer. Why shouldn't that exist for people who buy a gun at a gun show, where, incidentally, terrorists we know have bought guns?

So anything we can do quickly, we ought to do, but I also think a commission will make sure that we will not let the anger, the hurt, the guilt that we feel now dissipate with time or as a result of legislative gridlock—yes, legislative gridlock again.

Remember Lincoln's words at Gettysburg, that these dead shall not have died in vain. I think that should be our animating emotion and sense of purpose here, as reflected and I think led by the President's very powerful words in Newtown on Sunday night.

I remember after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 all the work we did in Washington to create the Department of Homeland Security, the 9/11 Commission, the legislation, passing the legislation, implementing the 9/11 Commission. A lot of work, bipartisan work, was done in Congress and in the

executive branch to make those laws and to keep us a lot safer, to prevent another 9/11 from happening. But I will tell you this, Mr. President, my belief—and I was at the center of all of this—those laws would not have been passed and enacted, and we would not be safer today if it were not for the extraordinary commitment of the families of people who were killed on 9/11 to get involved. They talked truth to power, and when Members of Congress and members of the executive branch were reluctant to act and were falling back in all political ways, self-defensive ways, those families faced them, face to face, and some in power turned their faces away because they could not take it. But, ultimately, those families brought about action.

These families in Newtown who have lost people—loved ones, children—will never be the same. I hope and pray they can come back to some semblance of normalcy. I hope that some of them will have the courage and the strength—which will take an enormous amount—to get involved in forcing our country to do whatever it can to stop anything like this from happening again. But in the larger sense, we are all members of the family. This is the American family. Those 26 people—those 20 children—were our children, our family members, and it is incumbent upon us now to summon not just the remorse and the guilt but the will to act to stop this from happening again and to save the lives of our family members.

I thank the Acting President pro tempore and yield the floor for my colleague and friend from Connecticut.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Connecticut for those very moving and important comments on the Senate floor at this profoundly significant time in the history of our State and our Nation.

REMEMBERING DANIEL K. INOUE

I want to join my colleagues who have expressed their admiration for Senator INOUE and our sense of loss at his passing. I admired him deeply as a patriot, a warfighter, a public servant, who was unstinting and unwavering in his commitment to our Constitution, the principles of equality and justice, and our national defense.

His loss is a loss for the country, but, particularly, personally, for all of us who serve in this body. I knew him less well than colleagues who have spoken eloquently, such as Senators REID and DURBIN and BOXER and LIEBERMAN, and one of my regrets, as I stand here, is that I did not have the time to know him better because he was such an extraordinary human being.

Perhaps one of the lessons for me personally is that time is short, as we all know, and we should make a greater effort in this body and among us in this profession to know our colleagues and to treasure their friendship.

I want to also thank my colleague from Connecticut for his very perceptive and powerful words on the tragedy in Newtown, CT, which brings me to the floor today with such a heavy heart. I thank my colleagues who have reached out to me, including the Senator from Vermont, a great friend, Senators KLOBUCHAR and DURBIN and BENNET and so many others seeking to help Connecticut. The collegiality of this body has been brought home to me in these days when others have sought to provide not only consolation but also suggestions for action.

One of my reasons for being on the floor today is to talk about action we can take. I want the families who are grieving now to know that my standing here to talk about policy and action in no way means any disrespect or effort to intrude on their grieving and emotional rebuilding. But we know on Friday a tragedy befell the community of Newtown, CT, and that tragedy is expressed in S. Res. 621 and H. Res. 833.

I thank my colleagues in both Houses for condemning the attack and offering their condolences to the people of Connecticut and, more importantly, the people and families who suffered these losses most directly. I have spent the last 4 days—or a better part of them—in Connecticut. Those 4 days are a time that I do not want to relive, ever.

I first learned about this incident on Friday morning in the midst of a normal day. I had events scheduled. I heard there was something wrong in the Danbury area.

As the details mounted, I left Hartford to go to Newtown and to the firehouse in Sandy Hook. I arrived there as a public official, but what I saw was through the eyes of a parent.

The firehouse in Sandy Hook was where parents went to find out if their children were okay. The way they found out was that their children appeared, or they did not. After a while, some of the children came. Some were reunited with their parents there or at the school, and their parents took them home, and others did not.

I will live forever with the sights and sounds of those parents as they emerged—the cries and sobbing, the cries of grief and anguish, the look on those faces.

The murderer blasted his way into the elementary school in Sandy Hook armed with a Bushmaster AR-15, an assault rifle; a 10mm Glock pistol; a 9mm Sig Sauer; and with multiple magazines filled with hundreds of rounds, that he used in an execution-style massacre.

Wayne Carver, who is the State medical examiner for Connecticut, has been in that job for more than 30 years. He has seen it all. But he has said he has seen nothing like this ever. There were 20 small bodies ripped apart, executed en masse.

There is no question evil came to Newtown, as Governor Malloy said that day. Evil came in its starkest, most inhumane terms. But heroism also came to Newtown.

The SWAT teams that went into that building actually saved lives. They saved hundreds of lives of students and staff in the school because the murderer took his own life when he knew they were entering.

There is the heroism, of course, of the principal, teachers, and others who ran toward the sound of gunfire. They ran toward danger to protect their children, children who were 6 and 7, their faces now on the front pages of newspapers with their stories inside.

There is the heroism of the State troopers who had to confirm the identities of the victims for their families and stayed with those families throughout the weekend.

There is the heroism of the community itself. Newtown is, indeed, a quintessential New England town. Everybody knows everybody else, which is a good thing but in a way also a bad thing because everyone's children knew the other children.

At the vigil Sunday night, two of the children who attend that school came up to me to show me some of the necklaces they had made with blue beads, 20 of them. There were 20 blue beads, each one for a child victim, and 6 stars for the adults. This community is not only quintessentially New England, it is quintessentially American in its strength, its resoluteness, its resiliency, its caring and courage.

Part of what has also inspired Newtown is the outpouring of support they have received from all across America and all across the world. Never doubt the messages you have sent, the thoughts and prayers made a difference to them. They truly have.

Newtown is a call for national reflection and for coming together. This tragedy hit Connecticut, but the town of Newtown is supported by the grief shared by all Americans, but it is also a call for action. It is the right time to ask what we can do to stop this sort of tragedy.

In recent years, there have been horrific shootings at Virginia Tech, in Aurora, in Oak Ridge, on university campuses, movie theaters, and in places of worship. There were many other places where unsuspecting Americans, going about their everyday lives, had those lives cut short in a few minutes of slaughter.

In Newtown, a lone gunman was able to kill 20 elementary schoolchildren ranging from 6 to 7 years old. He killed the school's principal, the school psychologist, and four teachers.

Sadly, there have always been and there always will be mentally ill people, mentally deranged or hateful people who want to lash out violently at the world. We will never be able to stop all of them from doing harm. But even if we cannot prevent all these tragedies, we must not surrender and say we will do nothing to prevent any more of them.

In the last few days, everywhere I have gone in Newtown, people have come up to me and said the same words

over and over. "We have to do something." People in law enforcement, families of victims, members of the clergy again and again have said those words, "We have to do something."

That is my commitment today, to do something; in fact, to do everything I can as a Senator to press and prevent the next tragedy. As a former law enforcement official, and as a father, I cannot do less.

There is no single law, no simple solution that will be a cure-all. But there are sound, sensible steps we can take, some involving new laws, some involving better enforcement of existing laws. Our local and State police, for example, and Federal agencies need more resources and support.

We need to do something to effectively ban assault weapons. I am talking about weapons that are not designed for self-defense or hunting but, rather, for killing and maiming human beings, often as many as possible, as fast as possible. These are weapons that are civilian versions of military weapons. There is no reason any such weapon should be for sale today in America.

We need to do something also to ban high-capacity magazines, also involved in this mass murder. What real hunter uses or needs 30-round clips? What self-defense situation is served by them?

We need to do something to prevent mentally ill people and criminals from having firearms. I don't know whether better laws could have prevented the shooter in Newtown from getting his hands on the weapons he used, but we must look at what we can do to identify such people with serious mental problems before it is too late and provide intervention and treatment to take those weapons out of their hands.

Today, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System has prevented nearly 1.8 million attempted purchases of firearms by mentally ill people or criminals. Clearly, that alone was not enough to prevent a number of tragic shootings. But I think we can all agree it is good those sales were not completed, and right now only 60 percent of gun sales involve a background check. We should ensure that all firearms sales involve a background check, including guns that are not sold by licensed dealers, and that those checks, wherever they are done, are thorough and comprehensive.

Nothing here means we should trample on the second amendment. The Supreme Court has spoken clearly in the Heller case that law-abiding Americans have constitutional rights to own firearms, whether for self-protection, hunting, competitive shooting or any other proper purpose. That is the law.

But the Supreme Court has also made clear the government can appropriately impose sensible regulations, as it can in many other areas of constitutional rights, on how firearms are used and purchased. Everyone would agree criminals and deranged people should not be able to get their hands on firearms.

On all these issues, we have to look for sensible common ground, rooted in common sense, and I believe there is room for people of good will to work together to find it.

Even as I say that, I am mindful that issues involving the second amendment rights and violence in the past fueled deep passions. Suspicion and passions have run deep and wide on both sides of this debate, including in this Chamber, and there is a lot of distrust to overcome.

I am here to keep faith with the people of Newtown who have grabbed my arm and said, "We have to do something." That is my commitment. I will work with the President and my colleagues in the Senate regardless of party or geography. I will work with any organization that is willing to engage in a thoughtful, constructive discussion about what steps to take to avoid tragedy such as the Newtown shootings in the future.

I will work to find a solution to this crisis, because it is a crisis, and I will not be deterred by any organization or campaign that uses scare tactics or intimidation. Because there was nothing more frightening, nothing more horrifying, than looking into the eyes of the parents who came out of that firehouse in Sandy Hook who lost their babies last Friday. That is any parent's worst nightmare.

I know there are some who say we can never do anything about the problem of gun violence; that we are entrenched as a nation and so polarized as a political body that we will continue to wring our hands at every massacre and never take action. Yet sometimes events happen that so horrify our country and our fellow citizens that they change the nature of the discussion. They change the political ground under us. They are a tectonic shift, and I believe the massacre of the innocent children and their loving teachers in Newtown is exactly such an event.

Yesterday, some of my Senate colleagues had the courage to join this call for action and say publicly we cannot go on as before. I wish to thank, particularly, Senator MANCHIN and Senator WARNER. Their heroic stance is an invitation, indeed a challenge, to every other Member of the Senate to join in this common effort to find common ground and at long last do something to stop the killing.

I also wish to thank, particularly, Senator REID, our majority leader, for his leadership in calling for a meaningful and thoughtful debate on gun violence.

"We have to do something. We have to do something. We have to do something." That is what people in Newtown have beseeched me over and over. I believe the American people agree. This is our moment, and we are the people to do it. We can. I ask each of my colleagues to listen to those voices and to hear their own hearts.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, first, I wish to join my thoughts on those of the two Senators from Connecticut and the Senator who just spoke, Senator BLUMENTHAL. He and I talked this weekend during these terrible times, and I told him the Judiciary Committee and the Department of Justice, on behalf of all the victims, were standing by to help them in any way they can.

#### REMEMBERING DANIEL K. INOUE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today is the first day since Hawaii became a State that it is not represented by DAN INOUE, either as a House Member or as Senator.

As I look at my dear friend's desk with the traditional white flowers, I can't tell you how much it pains me. He was one of the greatest Members of this body ever to have served and a dear friend to so many of us. He was perhaps the best role model for public service any American could ask for. Senator INOUE's story is one of great passion for his people, commitment to his calling of public service, and dedication to finding a better way forward for all Americans, a true patriot.

A soldier in World War II, a veteran of the Armed Forces, he fought for the freedom of the Nation he so loved and believed in. The Nation finally recognized that, making him a recipient of our Congressional Medal of Honor.

As a representative of Hawaii, he dedicated his career to establishing and solidifying a place for his State in Washington so generations of Hawaiians to come might know the benefits of what he did not have, Federal support for such important causes such as higher education, transportation, health care, and security. His advocacy was never in vain, and the people of Hawaii benefited immensely from his service.

But I think his efforts to bring people together is unmatched. The grace with which he conducted his work should inspire all of us, as it does me. He was the man who could reach out to both sides of the aisle, make friends and make peace. He poured his heart and soul into the Senate. He was first and foremost a person of the Senate, and we all felt his passion and concern for the work of this body. There is no doubt he is going to be greatly missed in these halls. He was a mentor. He was a friend. We traveled together. Our wives were friends.

The reason I didn't speak last night, I opened my desk and looked again—the desk I have now, this seat, I inherited from DAN INOUE—and his name is inscribed in it. As the distinguished Acting President pro tempore knows, we inscribe our names in our desks, and DAN INOUE's is there. When I looked at that last night I was overcome with emotion and so I did not speak then.

I realize I am delaying things a couple of minutes here, but when I think of my friend and I think of his name, I remember he said he wanted to be remembered as having represented his people and all Americans honestly and to the best of his ability. He filled that. He filled that. We all know he gave his everything to the Senate, and his legacy is for us to continue the work he has done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF OATH TO SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY AS PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE FOR THE 112TH CONGRESS

The VICE PRESIDENT. The senior Senator from Vermont, the President pro tempore elect, will be escorted to the desk for the oath of office by the Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] and the junior Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS].

The President pro tempore elect, escorted by Senators REID and SANDERS, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oath was administered to him by the Vice President; and he subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

(Applause, Senators rising)

#### NOTIFYING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE U.S. SENATE

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 622.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A Resolution (S. Res. 622) notifying the House of Representatives of the election of a President pro tempore.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 622) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 622

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives be notified of the election of the Honorable Patrick J. Leahy as President of the Senate pro tempore.

#### NOTIFYING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE U.S. SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 623.